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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
IPAA ACT 2018 CONFERENCE
SESSION A: EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

HOTEL REALM
BARTON, CANBERRA
WEDNESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2018

Nina Terrey: Okay, so, the first question for today, and I really encourage everyone to actually press something. I was running a conference last week, and it's very revealing when only 50% actually click, because we actually notice statistics. I really encourage everyone to answer this. The question is, in terms of your contribution to the insuring, or to ensure that the APS is fit for the future, how do you feel? How do you feel about that?

So, there are five options. Overwhelmed, this is a big responsibility for me to deliver. Okay, but I'm not really sure what I'm meant to be doing. Indifferent, it doesn't affect me. Good, I feel confident and I can play an important role. Great, I am excited about the contribution I can make. You can only pick one. Don't try and hedge your bets and pick a few, only one.

So, what I always like is as a spread of responses 'cause there's no such thing as an absolute position that people have. So, I'd encourage, if you're in the 5%, 3%, 19, 45, or 28, there's something for you to take away today. So, I really thank you for participating in that question. We are going to sprinkle a few of these in throughout the day, and that will just give us a bit of a feel for kind of the mood in the room, but also it's a really important I guess starting point about where your mindset is at, and it will be interesting to see where you get to by the end of today. So, thank you.

So, we are now going to move into Session A. We are going to be having a panel discussion, and the perspectives around the external view is what we will be focusing on this session. So, the questions that we are posing to our panel are around how are public services around the world adapting. Where is changing occurring, and what is working. And in this particular session, as Frances outlined, we will be hearing insights from the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Singapore. So, I am now going to introduce our three wonderful speakers, and after I've introduced them they will join me on stage.

Our first speaker, Her Excellency Erica Schouten, was appointment Ambassador to the Kingdom of The Netherlands to Australia in 2016. She started her career at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1994, with positions including time at the Hague with a focus on EU affairs, and a posting at the Dutch delegation to the United Nations in New York. She worked as head of the Security and Defence Policy Department in the Hague, deputy head of mission in Warsaw, and deputy permanent representative of the Netherlands to NATO. Erica's career has shown a strong focus on political security, and defence issues, mainly in multi-lateral settings. Wonderful to have you here Erica.

Speaker number two, His Excellency Chris Seed, commenced duties as the New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia in November 2013. Prior to taking up this position, he was a deputy secretary and a Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and previously worked in the Ministry of Defence. His earlier career include assignments in Tehran, Canberra, London, and Papua New Guinea where he was High Commissioner. He has also served with international peace monitoring team in the Solomon Islands, and the New Zealand delegation to the U.N. General Assembly. Welcome Chris.

And our third speaker, His Excellency Kwok Fook Seng, is currently Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia. Since joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995, Mr. Kwok has served in portfolios relating to South Asia and Latin America, the United Nations, and South-East Asia, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations. From 2011 to 2014 he was Singapore's permanent representative to the World Trade Organisation, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation in Geneva. As Ambassador for Climate Change from 2014 to 2016, he had lead the team which negotiated and concluded the Paris Agreement in 2015. It's wonderful to have you here.

I'd like to welcome our three speakers to the stage.

HE Erica Schouten: Well, good morning ladies and gentlemen, and it's an honour and a pleasure for me to be here with you today, and I would like to thank IPAA ACT, and especially ACT's President Frances Adamson, for inviting me. So, the question that I will try to shed some light on is, "How is the government adapting to rapid technological change?" And I have to say it's quite a daunting issue for me to speak to as I've been away from my country for eight-and-a-half years now. But looking into this issue I think prepared me better for my return in the new year.

I think before I start my presentation, there are a couple of things you should know about my country. We're small, just two-thirds of Tasmania. We have a population of 17 million. We don't have any natural resources to speak of, and yet we are the 18th economy in terms of GDP. The sixth most competitive, and the second most innovative. Well, how come? According to the World Economic Forum, responsible for the competitiveness index, the Netherlands performed well on institutions, protection of property rights, and ethics, and transparency. Our economy is an open one, which is marked by forgiving cultural attitudes towards entrepreneurial failure. A great willingness to delegate authority, entrepreneurs who are willing to embrace disruptive ideas, and fast growing innovative companies. The World Economic Forum also mentions the Dutch government's responsiveness to change, legal framework adaptability to digital business models, government's long-term vision, and political stability. I'm just quoting.

The Global Innovation Index points to the efficient way in which Netherlands translate investments in education research, and our R&D into high-quality innovation outwards. It also commenced the close corporation of the

business sector with knowledge institutions, including universities. Now, this corporation is part of a long Dutch tradition of consensual decision making between political parties. Governments in the Netherlands are always coalition governments made up of two, three, nowadays even four parties. Between employers and employees, and also between government, business, and knowledge institutions, and this lead a form of corporation also known as the Triple Helix, is at the heart of Dutch innovation policy. The government encourages public knowledge institutions to allocate part of their resources to the research of issues that are relevant for private business. But, at the same time, the government encourages private businesses to invest in public research, and this approach contributes to making better use of the knowledge we produce in spreading it more widely.

In our view, innovation is as much about new techniques as it is about new ways of working. New, because of the partners with whom we work, and also the ways in which we work. Let me give you an example. The use of block chain technology. Block chain is a good example of a potentially disruptive innovation that could be a game changer. It gives people a sense of autonomy in a sometimes chaotic world online. It cuts down on red tape, and it creates trust between parties. To assess how block chain can renew and enhance government processes and services, the Dutch government has launched 35 pilot projects. The pilot projects make clear which technological, societal, legal, and administrative issues government organisations will have to deal with in the near future, and one of the pilot projects, typically Dutch, concerns bicycles.

As you may know, there are more bicycles in the Netherlands than there are people. 17 million people own 22.8 bicycles. Of these, 1.8 million are electric bicycles, and as you know they're a bit more expensive than your normal pushbike. Up til now, none of these e-bikes were registered in a single system, which makes theft relatively easy and risk-free. Now, how can block chain change that? With bike block chain, the Dutch Vehicle Authority, a government agency, streamlined the coordination between parties that are involved after bike theft. In cooperation with IBM, the agency established an electric bike register, and make manufacturers put a GPS chip and a digital lock on e-bikes. So, if a lock is forced, it's GPS coordinates are immediately transmitted to the police, and a warrant is automatically generated. At the same time, insurance companies can see immediately whether or not the e-bike was locked at the moment of theft. And on that basis decide whether someone should receive compensation.

Well, this pilot was a great success, saving time and money for all parties concerned, and they are now working on making this solution available to the public nationwide. To make the Netherlands a front-runner in block chain implementation, the government is dependent on other parties, and that is why the government has teamed up with industry leaders and research institutes to create the Dutch block chain coalition. Partners in this coalition try to build a secure and reliable block chain infrastructure in the

Netherlands that meets the wishes of future users. The more reliable and secure the infrastructure, the sooner companies and government bodies are able to switch to large scale block chain application.

Another example is the development of the digital identity by the technical university, Delft. In addition to traditional I.D.'s like your passport or your driver licence, the university is working on a phone application that enables you to prove your identity quickly and securely. As part of the Dutch block chain coalition, this university has joined forces with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the current manufacturers of Dutch passports, and a law firm to develop an initial prototype for a digital stamp. This new technology will be tested shortly in two Dutch municipalities.

Now, block chain is just example of new digital technologies, but it illustrates our thinking that to make use of the opportunities offered by digitalization, the Netherlands must be a front runner in terms of research, experiments, and the application of new technology, and this way we will strengthen Dutch earning capacity, be able to give better direction to technological developments, and make full use of the economic and social opportunities offered by digitalization. At the same, digitalization raises new fundamental questions. For example, about privacy, and the future of jobs, and therefore we're also working on increasing trust of citizens and businesses. And to this end, we are strengthening the foundation for digitalization. Amongst others in the field of privacy protection, cyber security, digital skills and fair competition. The challenge in this transformation is to get and to keep everyone on board. Not only on the labour market, but in society as a whole. Thank you for your attention.

HE Chris Seed: Thanks Nina, and good morning everyone. Kia ora koutou. New Zealanders getting up to talk to large groups of Australians usually isn't a way to win friends and influence people, and it always feels a bit fraudulent being a New Zealander being brought to these events and giving an external perspective 'cause our two systems are so integrated. In fact, I was looking down the list of speakers today, and I must say you've got a predominance of people who have got a very close connections, or who have worked very closely with New Zealand over the years. David Thodey actually, if he wasn't born in New Zealand was certainly educated there. I noticed Kerri Hartland and Gordon de Brouwer have both worked very closely with our system for many years in different jurisdictions. Peter Woolcott in recent years has returned from a time as High Commissioner in Wellington, so you'll probably hear a lot of funny accents today, that's where they got them from.

The other reason too is New Zealand, of course, participates in COAG, and sits on many COAG, attends many COAG meetings, and that does three things for New Zealanders. Firstly, it reaffirms for us the wisdom of our predecessors in 1901 in not signing up. Secondly, it reminds us that as tough as Australia is sometimes on New Zealand, it's nothing compared to how tough you are with each other. And the third thing is that it's a real reminder

of the quality of the Australian public service because you can see it in the quality of the advice that goes forward, in the way in which our system engages with it, indeed draws on it, and so the topic your ... The subject matter you are canvassing today is precisely the same set of issues that are being canvassed in New Zealand at this very moment.

So, in just three brief points of context. One is in New Zealand the languages that digitization, automation, demographic shifts climate change and the sharing economy will transform our economy as it will your economy over the next 30 years. The second observation I'd make is that governments are essentially responsible for about 30% of the economy, and so they have an obligation and a duty, and it's a necessity to manage that well. Both in terms of the ... Effectively to manage it effectively and efficiently if we want to improve the economic social and security outcomes for our citizens. And the third point is that, the third bit of context is that in New Zealand, as I would argue here and in many other jurisdictions, the social licence for what a lot of what government is doing, and trust, is looking a bit tatty around the edges.

In New Zealand, inclusivity is in vogue as a piece of language. Our government, current government talked publicly about wanting to enable all people and regions to have equal opportunities to succeed. So, in my business, in the foreign policy business, that means as much as we're doing stuff off-shore, it means carrying messages back into our regional communities, our business communities, other sectors about the benefits of trade, the benefits of development assistance, and that's being replicated through the rest of the public service. But the public service is a key component enabler and benchmark for rebuilding that trust piece. So, all of that is just a couple of observations in respect of what's going on in New Zealand around the state sector act reform.

We've launched this in September, it's due to report back before ... Sorry, we launched it in September, it's due to report back in December, and it will inform a significant set of reforms, the biggest for 30 years in the New Zealand public service system. And so some of the things that we talk to are exactly, I think, the language that you hear here, or the issues which you're pursuing here. A unified public sector fostering a spirit of service is the sort of the high level ambition. We're trying to achieve better outcomes and better services which is essentially about creating value from interaction with the public service and wealth. We're about strengthening the constitutional role of the public service, so that's reinforcing some of those fundamentals.

Political neutrality, free and frank advice, merit based appointments, open and transparent handling of information, and it's also about making the public service more modern, more agile, and more adaptive so when New Zealanders look back here, one of the things that Australia does far better than us is machinery of government change. Your system's so much better than ours at being responsive as new governments come in, new policies,

new priorities, and reorganising the system. And that's why there are, probably why there are quite a few New Zealanders attached in some way or form to the Thodey review. Not only David himself, but people like Bill English and our State Services Commissioner, Peter Hughes.

So, this reform, just to touch on that briefly, on a system-wide level, what it's looking to see is the public service to operate as one joined up, you know, joining up systems to tackle big complex problems. Everything from domestic violence through to climate change, and also looking for much more convenient public services. That's the sort of second major driver of our reform programme. So, there's this idea the public expects more seamless and easy access to services, and it wants to deal with the system once, and wants to provide information once, and it wants it to be used effectively and securely. There are seven leaders of change which are being worked through. I won't touch on all of them, I'll just talk to two of them. In the broad they relate to legislation, to system design, in the New Zealand context what we call the Crown Maori relationship. To people in capability, to our public finance system. So, those are five of the seven leaders.

But the two I just wanted to touch on very briefly. The first is data and digital, and there's the strap line if you like in the New Zealand system is that digital is the engine of better services, and data is the key to better outcomes. And, we're wanting to use the digital piece to join up services for citizens around life events. This is quite a big thing in New Zealand at the moment, and so the practical example of it is something called Smart Start. This is an Apple website for people who are, you know, families having a baby. Our system's sort of determined that there are 12 different government services that you need to register for when you've had a baby, and there's usually a few other things going on at that, on those few moments after you've had that baby.

So, this is a sort of, essentially a one-stop shop using a digital platform. So, it enables you to go in and do all, navigate all of those requests to register the birth, to organise paid parental leave, to get a birth certificate, to register for a passport, to access health providers, and the system is looking at 17 other of these, 17 other life events where the intention is to do the same thing. The next one they're rolling out is the end of life piece, but it's also going to look at things like those moments when you start school, when you get a job, or when you become a senior citizen. And then the final one ... So, that's a very practical example of one of the leaders of a better, more agile public service delivering better value.

Another one I think which is quite interesting to dwell on relates to the so-called spirit of service, and this sort of the emotional connection really. It's why people like you and people like us invest in the public service, why we get into the public sector. It's about that emotional connection of giving something beyond oneself, and our state services commissioner often begins many of his presentations by talking about that. About what got him into the

public service, and about what keeps so many of the people he comes across in his job, turning up every day, doing things for the citizens of their country. One of the things that we've borrowed if you like, from Australia, is the public service recognition, and today, and I'll finish on this, for the first time we're having a public, it's called Public Service Day.

It's our first one today. It recognises the event in 1912 when our first public service act came into being, and it's a chance to reinforce some of those values which are fundamental to a modern public service. Neutrality, fairness, and integrity, but it's also a chance to recognise individual performance for meritorious service, so like you, we now have something as of today called the Public Service Medal, and we're also, through the State Services Commissioner himself, offering or providing commendations for people who are involved in frontline jobs. So, all of these things together represent a deep integrated look at our public service, and how you make it fit for the 21st century. I hope your discussions will provide plenty of views and advice about what your public service will look like in the coming decades. Thank you.

Nina Terrey: Thank you very much Chris. I'd now like to welcome Fook Seng to the stage. Thank you.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: Thank you and good morning. I'd like to thank Frances Adamson for making this happen, and to IPAA for this opportunity to engage with you. Now, there are overlaps. Going third is always a risk, but there are happy overlaps which I will mention as we go along.

Let me start by when Erica said they were small, I told Nina I can top that. [Crowd Laughter]

And let me give you that context. Australia is seven million square kilometres, Singapore is seven hundred. So, but small can be beautiful.

For us in the public service envisioning the future and preparing for all its realities is an activity that is coded in our DNA. Our public service offices either participate first hand or have to know the narrative well.

I'll give you two sets of information which sets the context of why this is so existential for us. Both based on the world economic foreign. Now I know we like small countries, like, I think the world kind-of life foreign because we always make it to the top ten because the Swiss based around the diverse activity run these industries, and the fact is I always get for Switzerland to appear in the top ten. So, we benefit.

2016, the WEF launched its network readiness index. This measures how well an economy uses information and communications technology to boost competitiveness and well-being. So the top ten went to Singapore, Finland, Sweden, Norway, USA, not small, Netherlands, Switzerland, UK, Lutzenberg,

and Japan. The commendation for Singapore read, Gains from information technology are widely shared in Singapore, and it makes excellent use of digital technologies to provide access to basic and government services and insures that schools are connected". Okay, now that.

Two years later, 2018, in Vietnam, where the WEF ran a regional meeting, there was a study of six Asian economies. Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, basically the more mature, Asian economies. This covered about 433 occupations across twenty-one industries. And here's the headline. "The Singapore labour market will face the largest job displacement in the next decade despite being at the frontier of the digital economy". 20.6% will have jobs displaced by 2028. The next closest for indication was Vietnam at 13.8%. By 2028 in that region, 28 million fewer workers will be needed to produce today's level of economic activity. The agriculture industry in Asian will be the worst hit. 9.9 million workers displaced. And in Singapore, 85,000 existing roles will disappear.

So in a two year space, same kind of methodology and people doing the studies. It can show you how our fortunes can change and how therefore for Singapore, where they are public service, where they are private sector company, the economy as a whole cannot rest, and we have to keep re-inventing ourselves.

Now in this context, meeting the challenges of the future is an economy wide activity for us, not solely for Park service. What many companies and multinationals describe as the government's responsiveness to the business needs, is really just a continued effort to ensure that our economy and the jobs that it generates doesn't disappear by irrelevance. We cannot not be responsive because in [inaudible] today our spot for choice. So staying in the top ten of the ease of doing business index is not for bragging rights.

Now I'll give you two concrete examples of what present initiatives are to drive this kind of future readiness. First is, we are embarking on twenty-three industry transformation Maps, or ITMS as have shortened them to. So the regulations and agencies closest to these twenty-three sectors are working with each of them to challenge them to think where they will be in five, ten, fifteen years. At all levels of the vertical, they are being asked to see where the disruption will come from and think how they will respond. They're not asked just to look at their own vertical but to look horizontally because very often the disruption will come from an industry outside of your own.

Lastly, the retraining, and re-skilling of human capital has to be done in conjunction with these predictions, and these sorts of insights that we gave, by sitting down one on one, company to company, to think these steps through. Now we can't control the external environment, but we can boost our own resilience through giving people the ability to adapt to disruption and to what happens.

To signal the reality that we will all be embarking on a lifelong learning journey. The government started what is called the skills future programme, where every working citizen gets $500.00 in the bank to take up any course you want. Origami, or coding. Something different from what do everyday. But it is just a signal to say, start learning because you have to keep doing that, and it may impact you if your particular sector, your particular role is disrupted.

Now the whole idea is to retain confidence of individuals, and inspire them to re-train, and transition, and if we do this right, we should not have to retrain [inaudible] at a big level. At the early end of the pipeline polytechnics universities are also engaging businesses to tune the pipeline of human capital. What skills, what capabilities are needed. This is said frequently but its only because it's true. For Singapore are human capital is the only research we have, so we have to treat it with a great care.

The second example I want to give you is where the overlaps begin. We package it as the smart nations initiative. It's not smart cities. Well, we're a city and a nation, so it's easier for us to call it smart nation, but it revolves around harnessing the widespread digital capabilities and data analytics that deliver public service, which is better than [inaudible] some of its parts.

Five clusters of work. The national digital identity which is very similar to what Erica spoke about, but the idea is to give every citizen a unique verifiable identity to transact in cyberspace with the same level of security as you do in a physical market space. So I think e-payments as a corary to this, not just peer to peer, or business to business, but it gets complicated when it is individual peer to business. There's a fragmentation that many platforms, whether its between apple and google, all through all the banks have launched on platforms, how to unify this, how to make it work, so that the economy doesn't suffer.

Third a smart nation sense of platform. Everything from personal alert buttons for the elderly to using our lampposts as sense of platforms to gather data for better physical understanding of the physical reality that people live to.

Four, smart urban mobility. Autonomous vehicles, pooled on demand public transport, hands free ticketing when you pass return stones, drone delivery of [inaudible].

Fifth moments of life very similar to what Chris spoke about. Looking at milestones of new [inaudible]. What other things you need to do when you move house? What kind of public services you need to engage?

What this means though is that the public service cannot but keep abreast. We cannot say, this doesn't involve us. Secondly, it involves a lot of interdisciplinary regulation and policy. Now it is not all stress intentioned.

But leaders have learned and adapted to embrace both the empowerment and the innovation that comes with this, and I think what we've learned to do is to have a less controlled environment, not more. Sandbox regulatory experimentation, where you have the ability to see how with light [inaudible] regulation in the beginning, how the dynamics play out between vendor and customer, and what kinds of protections need to be given. What kind of regulation need to be put in place. So for a public service that is not very large, our newest public service administrator told us to do this, "think big, start small and act fact". There's no IP on that. It's free for copy.

Thank you.

Nina Terrey: Okay thank you so much, Fook Seng. Now I've been listening intently. I'm doing lots of mind maps on my notepad here, I hope others are as well. You can't take my notes, but I've got three questions. One for each of you, and then I'm going to open up to the floor in terms of your questions. There's obviously a lot of synergies across each of your presentations, and I particularly want to zoom in on a couple of them, and feel free to build on where I start and take it to another point if you feel there's another point you want to emphasise.

But I'll start with you Erica. I'm just really interested in some of those obviously case statistics that start, that don't judge anyone's ability by size, but the sense of a spirit of innovation is really quite inspiring coming from the Netherlands. And I'm just wondering, are you able to share any insight in terms of if you walked into a room of public servants, or big partisan dialogue, what does it look like? What does that spirit of innovation look like in the public sector?

HE Erica Schouten: Well maybe let me tell you what my working environment will look like when I go back in January. The ministry of foreign affairs had to leave its old comfortable building. We're now housed together with another ministry, and some other government agencies. We have only hot-desking. We have .5 of work station per employee. I have a laptop with a secure working environment to work any time, any place, anywhere. But that's more the physical outlook.

I think what has really changed over the years, and I think especially applies for ministries of foreign affairs and that whole, I don't know if it applies to other countries, but at least my country that, we've always thought of being a bit of an ivory tower. Now we're much more engaging with the outside world. And like Chris said, our work involves now much more reaching out to businesses, to different regions, to citizens in general, to discuss in what way our work contributes to the needs, to the worries, to the concerns that they have. Another thing about is that you do not spend so much time in your office, so you don't need this full desk.

Nina Terrey: Yeah. Great. That's a fantastic answer. Thank you very much Erica. And there is a build in terms of where you've just taken that answer for you Chris.

There's a strong theme again building on this idea of this sort-of integrating, and one public sector. You've got great example of, in terms of that experience of having a baby and integrating those services at that one moment in time. I'm just wanting any sort-of insights again, sort-of zooming into the public sector around how that actually works? Because there's lots of different responsibilities, and accountabilities, that real ability to work as one public sector? Do you have any insights, any challenges or any anecdotes you've picked up around how that's played out?

HE Chris Seed: Well there's plenty of challenges because I think the sense is that our big reforms of the 1980's, and now it seems to lead to an itemised quite shallow, public sector, and working across the system wasn't really incentivized. Some of that was structural, because of legislation, or the way that public finance worked. Some of it's tonal, in the tones of the ministry, or sort-of expectation about where resources would get spent? Some of its emotional.

So I think that we're trying to recreate that sense of working across, and that sort of language of cooperation, collaboration and co-creation, as you hear a lot of that. And so to you again in my area, the foreign ministry area, one of the things that is critical to us is how we work in the Pacific. Australians sort-of got multiple levels of engagement in the Pacific. But one in five New Zealanders is essentially a Pacific origin, or from the region.

Our front line, the way we will improve so many things in with the Pacific, is not because of what the foreign ministry does, but it’s because of what the Department of Health does, or what the Police do, or what the civil litigation do, or ... So you have to have the systems in place which actually allow resources to be allocated by those departments that are fit to deliver goods and outcomes. So we're having to re-think all of that stuff. So I think in a practical sense, those are some of the things that we're having to do.

Nina Terrey: Yeah. Great. Thanks Chris. That was very informative. Thank you. Fook Seng, I'm going to give you a choice because there are two things I wanted to ask you, but you can choose which one. One of them was the learning journey point. I thought that was very interesting of seeing in terms of encouraging Singaporeans as a whole of community to think about learning. And then obviously the zoom on that which is well what are kind-of one or two things that public servants, what's their focus of learning? There's that question. Or the experimentation one. I was intrigued by that experimentation sandbox. So you can choose either one, and if you don't answer one of them, someone from the floor can ask the other one if you want to hear the answer?

HE Kwok Fook Seng: Sure.

Nina Terrey: So choose which one you like.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: I think the sandbox one can be dealt with later. But let me talk about learning. There's also a beta driven reality to this. We have been functioning at below replacement rates for a very long time as a society. So our cohorts are shrinking. And you notice this because the primary schools are starting to emerge because [inaudible].

So when you have that bandwidth all the way through to institutions of higher learning we are engaging them to think about providing lifelong education now. That people from the workforce will probably zip in and out to take renewal, to improve themselves micro credentials to put you in a better place. So that's at a macro level.

At the micro level I think every organisation at least in the public service, now is forced to think about developing the individual. The talent, and the leadership capabilities. In our assessment, annual assessment exercise, which is on an electronic platform, you have an individual development plan where individuals can speak to what their aspirations are, and supervisors can tune that to what opportunities are ... and the organisations can take note of where personal interests are. But also there's a section that speaks to how much work you've done in the previous year, which is interdisciplinary, which is cross-silo, which engages partners and colleagues in either the private sector, or elsewhere in the public service.

So all this is learning. Learning to cross a silo is a big deal. Especially for younger officers who don't feel empowered to do so. For us we pick up the phone and we know these people and we've grown up with them. But that in itself is a learning point, and I think that at one level, all of this high level speak about being ready for the future is not just about the leaders, it is for every individual in the public service. And I think that message needs to permeate.

Nina Terrey: Fantastic. Thank you so much Fook Seng. Great answer. And I'm now going to open up to the floor in terms of raising some questions. What would be fantastic is that as you think about that question, when you stand up, if you can introduce yourself, where you're from, the organisation, and to ask your question. What we actually will do, we're going to take a couple of questions from the floor just so that gives our respective panellists some time to process some of those questions. So I believe we have one here.

Michael: Michael Manthorpe I am the Australian Ombudsman Commonwealth, and also locally the Ombudsman for the ACT. I think it’s fantastic IPAA has you three people here today. You've made a really wonderful contribution already, but my question goes to a topic that you didn't address directly, but I think applied here and there. And that goes to integrity. So it struck me that all three of your countries rank ahead of Australia on transparency internationals index of corruption perceptions. I'm sure you will be more

diplomatic than to tell us what we should do about that, but I wonder if you could reflect on what it is in your systems and your public services that help create an environment in which corruption is perceived to be enviably low.

Nina Terrey: Great. Thank you so much Michael. Do we have another questions from the floor?

Rob: Rob here from the Department of Environment and Energy. Thank you your Excellency's. That was some fascinating insights. I wouldn't mind if you gave some reflections on your perspective of Australia's federal structure. Do it as a long term Commonwealth, public servant, obviously federation brings some challenges in the way things are done, but also some great opportunities in saying add different perspectives. But saying what your saying, what's your advice about how we should go about possibly refining or adjusting, and if you had one piece of advice for our Commonwealth public servant, upright in the federal system, what would it be?

Nina Terrey: Okay thanks very much Rob. We might put those two questions to the panellists start I think. So who would like to respond to either question and just clarify which one you are answering.

HE Chris Seed: Erica.

Nina Terrey: Thanks Chris that was my job. You're meant to answer it.

HE Erica Schouten: Maybe first on the integrity issue. Let me just speak for my organisation that I know best. It starts with a cultural phenomenon, which is the low portal puppy syndrome. I think that the tolerance of the public towards the public service in general is not great. But I lived in New York and tried to hire an apartment and there were a lot of apartment buildings where they said, "no pets no diplomats". It gives you sort-of a sense of where you are. But I think in our job actually, it's quite a healthy thing to keep in mind. That's one thing.

The other thing I think is a very strong culture of accountability. Zero tolerance. So you see bad examples. We have people on [inaudible] accountable, but also to foster this sense of service to the public to deliver services to citizens and then with everything we do we have to think twice if we are really answering their needs, and if we do it an efficient way and if we spend the money wisely. And we talk a lot about it. We just a month of integrity, and all sorts of workshops, and you get grey areas. Their the main [inaudible] should discuss it, we all know what black and white is, it's the things in between. Be transparent about it, motivate your oppositions, and put that out in the open.

Nina Terrey: Great, Chris, and Fook Seng, would you make a comment on that question there.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: Maybe on that, on my course question. We've had a long reputation as enrolments. Its approach to whether its crime or corruption. The penalties are [inaudible]. But moving into a very cyberspace dominated future economy. I think we have to imply a degree of integrity there, that people will not abuse those systems. Put aside all the hacking and the external threats, but the people that run those systems will not be abusing those, and the data that's held within there for purposes other than what it's meant for, to create that service.

And there's several ways to do this. One, you mesh both process and platforms. Procurement for instance, all government procurement now is done through a centralised portal, so there is a technology platform that allows us to have that. But your processes in terms of the backend and all of that, the people who manage this have to go on mandatory leave, other people will take on their jobs for fixed periods to see.

You have a combination of things and there's many risk factors out there from the private sector actually that we can pick up and implement. I don't think you'll ever get rid of it. That threat is ever-present because of human nature.

Therefore it is a little bit of design process, and engineering solution to this so that you give enough ... what do you call it? Back up or fail safes to ensure that any of this activity is picked up. We are, after all, talking about big data, data mining, artificial intelligence, and the ability to spot all of these things using the logarithms.

So there's a bit of ... I'm oversimplifying this, but there are ways and means to tackle this moving into the future.

HE Chris Seed: Well they're good Christians... Because they're both to point tricky answer you sort of find yourself falling back on general-isms. And I'm not sure that I actually have too much wisdom to offer. Except to give a shout out for Australia. I mean as challenging as federation is, the last time I looked, Australia kept sprouting the fact that they're 27 years of unhindered economic growth. You have one of the wealthiest societies on the planet. Your systems, as challenging as sometimes the federal state piece is to operate... Which goes to my earlier point about the benefits of sitting in co-ag meetings. Nevertheless, it is hugely successful and clearly there are some sort of constitutional challenges by having a written constitution sometimes does effect things.

Citizenships is an obvious one. We just changed the law when we had a problem with the dual citizen parliamentarian. But at the end of the day your system does seem to me that it delivers hugely and one of the reasons is because exactly what the [inaudible] review's doing at the moment. It holds these issues up, it revisits them, it consults widely on them, people put views up, they're debated and tested. I think that's why our system, in essence,

tracking what's going on here, not in that jurisdiction, but in things whether it's the banking royal commission or the way you thinking about energy markets or whatever the public policy question is because so often, the rigour that's brought to it by the Australian system at large does send your country in good [inaudible] and I think that's not that there aren't challenges but the success rate at the moment looks pretty impressive if you sit on the other side of it.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: Maybe I could take a stab at Rob's question, although it's a difficult one. You'll never get any of us to criticise your government. You realise that, right?

Look, it is difficult. It's easy, like I said, for a country, a nation state of 700 square kilometres. The layers that you're dealing with... Even if the federal government were perfect, you'd still have that challenge of translating that into the state level.

But can I maybe just take a stab at the implied question there? And I read you a quote from the same minister that I gave you that shorthand slogan from earlier.

"Global politics is changing from being an art of a long term search for the better life to an auction for short term euphoria."

Now, that's a reality. We all serve political masters. And I had the opportunity to put this question as a group, we were in one of these leadership groups, to three former heads of civil service in Singapore. And we consistently got the same answer, "Do your job even better. Do it harder. Drive the facts, drive the empirical data, drive the informed decision." And that I think is how we do our jobs and I think Chris' testament about the quality of information that goes to co-ag is precisely that. That's how we do our jobs.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you. Other questions from the floor for the panel?

We have a few, great.

Go here, then here. Oh, just here. It's hard to see everyone.

Olivia: Good morning, Olivia Chen from Department of Home Affairs. Thank you, your excellencies for being with us this morning.

I was particularly struck by Ambassador Schouten's reference to a higher tolerance of failure as one of the key drives for experimentation and how [inaudible] referred to that a little bit yourself, talking about experimenting with the regulation.

So I think one of the off-quoted criticisms of the Israelian Public Service is [inaudible]. And whether that's right or wrong. I am interested in your reflection of how you create a great culture of experimentation, what are the systems and processes you put in place to make the process of failure not scary but exciting. And to ensure that when there is failure, it doesn't hamstring innovation longer term. Thank you.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you very much Olivia. Fantastic question. We have another one just here.

Dr. Stars: Yeah, thank you speakers. Dr. Robert Stars from the Crawford School at the ANU.

Two questions actually occur to me. Thank you for your talk, but the distinction that I'm drawing is actually between the short term ... short terms of any elected government and their capacity or limited capacity to actually think a longer term. And the importance of any public servant or department to actually do that thinking and be in a position to offer courageous advice to government.

And the second question is within that context actually. You talk about multidisciplinary. I wonder whether it's multi-sector. I mean how do sectors actually work together to give courageous advice to an elected government in your opinion? Thank you.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you very much Robert. We'll take one more, we'll might as well to three and then we've got good bank. Thank you.

Cath: Hi, thank you so much. Cath Ingram from KPMG and thank you speakers. I think the international perspective is refreshing where we can all be in our little camera bubble here.

You all talked about data and digital, and what necessitates then is a digital identity. Australia has recently made some announcements of our own policies as we continue to struggle and explore what that means. But I'm interested from your nation's perspective; how do citizens view, see and engage the use of the digital identity?

You know, for example, from the Netherlands where the bicycle example. What motivates the citizens to want to engage and want to utilise that digital identity. Thank you.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you very much Cath. Okay so we have three questions and it is really up to whoever wants to go first, and whichever question you'd like.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: I can jump onto the last question first in reverse order. Singapore's long had a physical identity card. It's controversial in some societies. It hasn't been for ours. The key to the citizen is convenience.

Pre - 9/11 that single number, I mean very much grew into your U.S. Social Security number. What was your key to public services, to verification, for transactions. At one point both our passports and our national identity card had the same number. Then of course we needed to make sure that passports couldn't be forged, therefore now we rotate them with a different number more often.

So even that reality shifts, but the focus is about the citizen centering your policy and your regulation around the ease of use. And this goes to the sandbox thing. You've got to try it and see what the reaction is. Sometimes they love it, sometimes they hate it. For any number of reasons. And you may have curve balls thrown at you, but it does therefore ...

This is part of the second question where you actually need sectors to work together. You kind of have to reach across ... For us again we're small. We're one layer of government so an inter-departmental or inter-ministry committee is not so hard to pull together. The key is getting the right people. But it does do away with what I call traditional public management taught ... systems. I'm just drawing on my own time in the Kennedy School in Harvard. I've had to kind of let go of some of those things that were late 90's. Doesn't work anymore. The reason we are told to think big and start small but act fast is because if you went through that traditional exercise of consulting all your state holders, putting something up, the problem would have overtaken you three times over. Right?

Now there's a difference between looking to be proactive and actually being proactive. And what nature of policy you roll out. Is it to protect the consumer or is it to protect government revenue or protect your own. We've got to be very clear. So I think all of these factors come into play, but we are fortunate because we are very flat government and we have the ability to move a little faster.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you Fook Seng. Erica, do you have some thoughts and questions?

HE Erica Schouten: Yes. The high tolerance for failure. I think taking the block chain implementation as an example. So the government is trying to lead way by signing these 35 projects and actually after I finished my notes for preparing for this meeting there was a huge article in one of our main papers saying, "Well, a lot of these pilots are never gonna be a fruit. They're gonna fail utterly." But the same article said, "How bad is that?" Because we're trying to steer this technology in a direction that's useful for us.

So what do we take away from these failures? What have we learned about the legal challenges, the [inaudible] challenges, the societal challenges? So in the end it will bring us something even if it doesn't work.

We have a vibrant start-up community in the Netherlands. A lot of start-ups don't make it beyond the first year, but then you have a few like WeTransfer and Booking.com and TomTom, and they are the successes.

So what can we learn from the failures for others then to do better. And I think by government leading the way with doing these pilots and being transparent about what works and what doesn't work and what we take away from that. That also encourages others to do the same thing.

The question about the digital identity, we've had one for a long time. We're now actually in a process of taking the next step where citizens and entrepreneurs will have more autonomy, more control over their personal data so that they can adjust them, that they can grant permission before the data are being used, that they can also see who have been using their data and what for. So to give people the sense of more control, but I think in addition to that is just as Fook Seng said, the convenience. This bicycle example is a good one. You know I remember many of my bikes were stolen in Amsterdam, it happens all the time there. You know, have them go to the police station and reporting that and then haggling with your insurance company. So it's just very convenient.

I think there is a downside or a risk to that, as well. We were having a discussion about a second try with a digital patient [inaudible]. Very topical history here, as well. We tried ten years ago, that didn't work. We're trying again. But for instance, doctors are a bit reluctant because I think the people trust the system so much that they may be wanting to share their data too widely. So we also have to educate people in what do you share with whom. Make them more resilient very much as Fok saying a little too earlier, as well.

Nina Terrey: Great, thanks very much Erica. Now Chris, your thoughts?

HE Chris Seed: Well I think ... I don't know that it seems that New Zealand has a ... I'm not even sure a more permissive place for experimentation than any other. We tend to we have in the past [inaudible] between sort of quite big reforms and if you want to thinking about the public sector, a sort of mess of sort of reforms, things we went through in the 80's.

And then that sort of lead to a sort of reverse reaction where systems said we actually needed to ... actually energetic, incrementalism is what we needed to be about. That with the social licence, the political permission, or the sort of ambition for these big reform programmes was wearing on the public. And that sort of longer term, more incremental sort of change, was a much sort of more direct way to go.

And I think that those sort of debates still continue in New Zealand. I don't know that whether our public service looks more ... less [inaudible] than here. I think you can look at particular sectors where ... which have done sort of arguably better. And often, that goes to leadership. If leadership from

ministers, leadership from public service leaders, leadership from sector experts.

And it seems to me that ultimately for these things to work you actually need an ecosystem approach. You need legislation and regulation, and you need frameworks and you need people who are invested in it. And it's bringing those things together which will actually fit the change rather than a sort of a top down or of some sort of other ornate sort of structure which will deliver the outcomes that you're seeking.

Nina Terrey: Great, now we're heading towards the end of this session. And you have one more task to do for audience. Just one quick takeaway or giveaway [inaudible] but to leave with the audience from your perspectives on any aspect that we've discussed or a thought that's come to mind.

Chris, we'll start with you.

HE Chris Seed: Yeah, well the thing that I'm ... that I am sort of struck by in a sense looking ... bit of an engagement like this is it makes you forces you to look back into your own system. And the thing that I'm really interested in in our system and strain in New Zealand sort of [inaudible], bit of a rolling ball on these thing. You lead on one, we lead on the other in terms of the particular issues.

But this idea about the spirit of service. It's not the mechanical elements of a good leading public service, but it's actually that sort of emotional connection. Why people get up and do the jobs that they do. Whether it's sort of running in a state bureaucracy, delivering health and education services of the front line through to thinking about what a new digital world's gonna work for us. You know the things that actually get people out of bed to do things and to contribute to their fellow citizens. And it's really striking to me, looking back into our in system, how much, how strong this narrative runs through ministers, how strong it runs through the [inaudible] you probably see it in the leadership. The sort of thing that you have to ... There is a need to keep connecting people with that element rather than simply ballot sheets, outcomes, targets. All of those things are useful, but they're not sufficient.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you Chris. That was a nice point to leave on. Thank you. Erica or Fook, who'd like to take it. Erica?

HE Erica Schouten: Well you know I have to confess before I prepared for today, I didn't know what block chain was. I don't know if I know it now, but [crosstalk] a good way to reintroduce things. But we ... in trying to keep up with all these new technologies, the risk that we all collectively run is to lose sight of exactly the people we serve. The citizens and the entrepreneurs have to remain our key focal point. And the issues that trust us a bit [inaudible] it was a nice way of putting it, Chris. I think that goes for all our countries.

So we have to double our efforts to keep people on board. And to talk with them about what they expect from you ... services. But also to build their resilience. Because if not we can go high speed ahead and be very innovative, it's a trial, but it will not be picked up by people on the country. We will leave a lot of people behind and I think that is actually the biggest challenge for all while we're trying to reinvent ourselves and do it at a higher speed. But it has to remain very human centred to be effective.

Nina Terrey: Great, thank you so much Erica.

HE Kwok Fook Seng: And if I follow from Erica's point that you no longer as a public service have to look after your key clients, but you also have to look after the fringes and the peripheries. Lets not beat ourselves up too much. All four economies represented here do things pretty well.

But I think the real challenge is when you're doing something good and well do not assume that that sets you permanent on a bar. Because the context and circumstance will keep changing around us. And I think that's where the continual drive at least for us it's very clear, that if we are not evolving, actually something's wrong.

Nina Terrey: Great, well said. Thank you so much. Can we give a round of applause to our [crosstalk] panel.